(NABARD) had constituted a Working Group to recommend, inter-alia, recruitment and promotion rules for the categories of posts which are now in existence in RRBs. The Working Group's report has recently been made available to the Government by NABARD.

[English]

Sethu Samudram Project

6869. SHRI P. P. KALIAPERUMAL: Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government propose to implement the Sethu samudram Project;

(b) if so, the details therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI JAGDISH TYTLER): (a) to (c). The Eighth Plan proposals have not been finalised.

Smuggling of Silver in Gujarat

6870. SHRI SHRAVAN KUMAR PATEL:
SHRI HARISINGH CHAVDA:

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether attention of the Government has been drawn to the newsitem captioned, "Massive Silver hauls in Gujarat" appearing in the Pioneer dated March 16, 1992;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the reaction of the Government thereto;

(c) whether the international smuggling syndicate operating out of Dubai has switched over from gold to silver smuggling after the facility to bring in the country has been provided by the Government;

(d) if so, the details thereof and the guantity and value of the silver seized in Gujarat during the last three years and especially since March, 1992; and

(e) the action taken or proposed to be taken by the Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCES (SHRI RAMESHWAR THAKUR): (a) to (e). Government is aware of the news item. Available reports and seizures made indicate that both gold and silver continue to be sensitive to smuggling into the country. The quantity and value of to gold and silver seized by the Customs authorities through out country in the last 3 years is given below:–

	Gold		*Silver*	
	Value (Rs. in lakhs)	*Quantity (in kg.)*	*Value (Rs. in lakhs)*	*Quantity (in kg.)*
1990	19296	5721	14956	216447
1991 (Prov)	18700	4926	13808	197905
1992 (upto 30th March) (Prove.)	3964	816	3992	48340

However, since smuggling is a clandestine activity it is not possible to say whether the international smuggling syndicates operating out of Dubai have switched over from gold to silver smuggling. The value and quantity of silver seized in the State of Gujarat over the last 3 years and in 1992 especially since March 1, 1992 are given in the table below and show substantial seizures after March, 1, 1992. This could be due to increase in smuggling on account of high domestic prices of silver and substantially lower international prices as well as better anti-smuggling efforts.

Year	*Quanity seized (in M. Ts.)*	*Value (Rs. in crores)*
1989	6.3	4.2
1990	44.4	30.7
1991*	36.8	26.0
1992* (Jan. & Feb)	7.9	6.5
Since 1.3.1992*	16.10	12.9

*Figures are provisional.

The Customs authorities are vigilant against smuggling including that of silver. Intelligence is targeted against such smuggling. The field formations have been equipped with vessels, vehicles, firearms, etc. Sophisticated equipment such as night vision binoculars, X-ray baggage machines, metal detectors, etc. are being increasingly used Close co-ordination is also being maintained between all the agencies concerned with the detection and prevention smuggling including that of silver.

[*Translation*]

Voluntary Retirement Scheme for Employees of Bombay Port Trust

6871. SHRI VILASRAO NAGATHRAO GUNDEWAR: Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government propose to introduce a voluntary retirement scheme for the employees of Bombay Port Trust and other public sector undertakings under his Ministry;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the time by which the scheme is likely to be implemented?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI JAGDISH TYTLER): (a) Voluntary Retirement Scheme for all port Trust (including Bombay Port Thrust), Dock Labour Boards and Public Sector Undertakings under this Ministry has been issued.

(b) The details are:–

(i) An employee who has completed 10 years' of service or completed 40 years of age may seek voluntary